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# News Release

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## U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Fights Flood in Upper Midwest

VICKSBURG, Miss., April 25, 2001 -- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers continues to work, alongside local, state and other federal agencies, to prevent and reduce flooding due to snow melt combined with heavy spring rains in the Upper Midwest, primarily on the Red, Minnesota and Upper Mississippi rivers and their principal tributaries.

The U.S. Coast Guard has closed the Upper Mississippi River to navigation from Upper St. Anthony Falls, Minneapolis, Minn., at mile marker 860, to Lock & Dam 16, East Muscatine, Ill., at mile marker 457. In addition, the St. Croix River is closed from mile marker 0, Prescott, Wis., to mile marker 26, Stillwater, Minn. The Corps and the Coast Guard work together to determine hazardous condition criteria for navigation.

**St. Paul District**

The Corps' St. Paul District continues to work with the states of North Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Iowa, the National Guard, several municipalities and other federal agencies to minimize the flooding.

Under Public Law 84-99 (Flood Control and Coastal Emergencies) authority, the District has provided assistance in the form of emergency levee construction in the communities of Wahpeton, Fargo, Grand Forks and Pembina, N.D., and Breckenridge, Minn. To date, these measures have protected those communities by extending the levees to a height two feet above forecasted river crests.

Under Public Law 84-99, the Corps of Engineers provides emergency assistance for flood response and post-flood response activities to save lives and protect developed property during or following a flood or coastal storm. Assistance to individual homeowners or to agricultural land is not permitted under this authority.

Levee work has also been performed on the Minnesota River to protect Montevideo and Granite Falls, Minn., and Glen Haven, Wis., on the Mississippi. Sandbagging of critical structures on the Upper Mississippi has also been undertaken.

Previous work performed in Grand Forks, N.D., and East Grand Forks, Minn., following severe flooding in 1997, is expected to help protect those cities from this spring's flood event.

As of April 24, the St. Paul District had provided more than 3.4 million sandbags, 74 pumps and more than 444 rolls of plastic sheeting to affected communities along the rivers for flood fighting. A total of 320 St. Paul District personnel were on location supporting the flood fight during the height of the event. Today there are still approximately 30 people actively working emergency operations.

Locks are not expected to open to navigation until early to middle May at various locations. Locks will reopen when conditions are safe and water levels appropriate for operation.

The St. Paul District maintains a website that includes valuable and up-to-date information on the flood fighting effort, estimated lock opening dates, along with information and points of contact for other programs and operations. The web site address is: www.mvp.usace.army.mil

The Corps' St. Paul district covers more than 139,000 square miles, including Minnesota, Wisconsin, North Dakota, South Dakota and Iowa. The District has responsibility for 13 of the 29 locks and dams on the Mississippi River.

**Rock Island District**

The Corps' Rock Island District is supplementing

state, county, city and village emergency flood-fighting efforts with needed supplies and technical assistance.

To assist affected communities in fighting the flood, the District has dispatched 28 flood area engineers throughout the projected flood region. Flood area engineers provide expert guidance on construction of sandbag levees, flood-fighting techniques, flood information and provide flood fight supplies as necessary.

To date, the Corps has provided the following flood fight materials and equipment: more than 1.5 million sandbags, more than 1000 rolls of plastic sheeting, and 40 pumps to affected communities.

The District is also providing the public with information about current water levels, lock openings, and National Weather Service predictions of future levels through the following Internet site: www.mvr.usace.army.mil.

The Rock Island District has built major urban flood-protection projects in most of the Upper Midwest on the Mississippi River and they are working to protect communities during this flood event. The District’s flood area engineers have been in the field for more than three weeks advising communities of the pending threat and providing technical assistance.

The District's jurisdiction covers more than 78,000 square miles and includes 314 miles of the Mississippi River from Guttenberg, Iowa, to Saverton, Mo., and 268 miles of the Illinois Waterway from Lake Street in downtown Chicago to the LaGrange Lock and Dam, southwest of Beardstown, Ill.

**From Cairo, IL to the Gulf of Mexico**

The flooding that is affecting the Upper Mississippi River will not have much of an affect on the Lower Mississippi River.

“The Lower Mississippi is simply a bigger river, which gets most of its flow from the Ohio-Tennessee river system,” said Larry Banks, chief of hydraulics for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ Vicksburg District.

The water will dissipate before it reaches the lower river, according to the National Weather Service. To keep track of daily river stages along the lower length of the river, check out the websites at: St. Louis District, www.mvs.usace.army.mil; Memphis District, www.mvm.usace.army.mil; Vicksburg District, www.mvk.usace.army.mil; or the New Orleans District website at www.mvn.usace.army.mil.

**Costs**

More than $5 million of Flood Control and Coastal Emergencies funds have been committed to date in support of state and local flood fight activities. It is estimated that the St. Paul and Rock Island districts have expended an additional $1.2 million from their current year operations and maintenance (O&M) budgets for flood fighting efforts.

**Summary**

The Corps is closely monitoring weather conditions in the upper Midwest area during the next few weeks. Additional rains may induce potential new crests on already swollen rivers.

Corps officials caution communities to be aware of changing weather conditions and closely monitor the impact of additional rain on flood protection already in place.

The Corps continues to remain on alert to provide additional technical assistance to communities as needed.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mississippi Valley Division (MVD), includes portions of 12 states and encompasses 370,000 square miles.
The district offices that conduct the programs and activities overseen by the Mississippi Valley Division are located
in St. Paul, Minn.; Rock Island, Ill.; St. Louis, Mo.; Memphis, Tenn.; Vicksburg, Miss.; and New Orleans, La.

View pictures of St. Paul District's flood fight efforts at:

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Cutline: GRANITE FALLS, MINN. -- Grant Riddick, a geologist with St. Paul District, with a member of the Minnesota National Guard on the levee in Granite Falls, Minn. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' St. Paul District authorized construction of the levee along the flooding Minnesota River to protect the city of Granite Falls. The levee used about 17,000 cubic yards of fill material and clay. The water was 895.2 feet. Flood stage is at 888 feet. Photo by Burch Communications.

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Cutline: GRANITE FALLS, MINN. -- "It's the finest sand bag ring levee ever constructed," said Grant Riddick, geologist with the St. Paul District. Riddick and Timm Rennecke, a park ranger with the St. Paul District, started the ring levee between midnight and 1 a.m. when flood waters from the Minnesota River started to backup into a storm sewer and into a residential neighborhood. The city and the Minnesota National Guard topped off the ring levee. Photo by Burch Communications.

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Cutline: GRANITE FALLS, MINN. -- Grant Riddick, a geologist with the St. Paul District, and Bob Silvagni, St. Paul District Readiness Branch, review construction of the levee in Grand Forks on the Minnesota River. The levee used about 17,000 cubic yards of fill material and clay. The water was 895.2 feet. Flood stage is at 888 feet. Photo by Burch Communications.

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Cutline: GRANITE FALLS, MINN. -- Grant Riddick, a geologist with the St. Paul District, placed a survey level rod into a sandbag ring at a catch basin of an ungated storm sewer at Granite Falls. The vehicle in the background belongs to the Minnesota National Guard. Photo by Burch Communications.

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Cutline: GRANITE FALLS, MINN. -- Douglas Crum, a geotechnical engineer with the St. Paul District (at left), discusses the flood fight in Granite Falls, Minn., with Grant Riddick, geologist with the St. Paul District. Crum was the area engineer for the Minnesota River basin. Riddick was sub-area engineer and based in Granite Falls Emergency Operations Center for the flood. Photo by Burch Communications.

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Cutline:  GRANITE FALLS, MINN. -- Bob Silvagni (left), St. Paul District Readiness Branch, discusses fortifying the levee on the Minnesota River in Granite Falls, Minn., with Jeff Stanek, sub-area engineer for Montevideo, Minn. Photo by Burch Communications. View pictures of Rock Island District's flood fight efforts at:

\\MVD1\HOME\mvd\PICS\MVR Sandbag demo 01.jpg
Cutline:  OQUAWKA, ILL. -- A member of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Emergency Management team demonstrates the proper procedure for filling sandbags.  The Corps frequently visits such sites to assist the public's flood-fighting efforts as well as providing expert guidance on constructing sandbag levees, flood-fighting techniques, flood information and guidance.  U.S. Army Corps of Engineers photo.

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Cutline:  MOLINE, ILL. -- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Emergency Management members offer guidance to a member of the public sandbagging at scene in Moline, Ill.  The Corps frequently visits such sites to assist the public's flood-fighting efforts as well as providing expert guidance on constructing sandbag levees, flood-fighting techniques, flood information and guidance.  Photo by Mark Kane, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District Public Affairs Office.

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Cutline:  MOLINE, ILL. -- A member of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Emergency Management team inspects the integrity of the public's sandbagging efforts in Moline, Ill.  The Corps frequently visits such sites to assist the public's flood-fighting efforts as well as providing expert guidance on constructing sandbag levees, flood-fighting techniques, flood information and guidance.  Photo by Mark Kane, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District Public Affairs Office.

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Cutline:  MOLINE, ILL. -- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers'

Emergency Management members are exuberantly greeted by a member of the public after arriving at a sandbagging scene in Moline, Ill. The Corps frequently visits such sites to assist the public's flood-fighting efforts as well as providing expert guidance on constructing sandbag levees, flood-fighting techniques, flood information and guidance. Photo by Mark Kane, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District Public Affairs Office.